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ADDRESS

OF THE

NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC VOLUNTEERS.

MARCH, 1860.



HEADQUARTERS :
722 BROADWAY, NEW-YORK.
1860.

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Headquarters National Democratic Volunteers,

722 BROADWAY.

NEW-YORK, MARCH 10, 1860.

FELLOW CITIZENS :

In all nations in the excitement engendered by political animosities men are apt to be influenced by the dictates of party, rather than guided by the true principles of government, and by their exertions for personal success or the triumph of some pet theory they steadily undermine the institutions they are most desirous of maintaining.

In such cases it becomes the duty of good citizens to impress on the public mind a more calm and deliberative consideration of public policy and principles of action, and by an active participation in the contests of public life, endeavor to check the spirit of innovation which triumphs only at the expense of existing institutions.

We have reached a crisis in political affairs that demands the serious attention of every national man in the community.

The public mind agitated by the violence of political discussions ; States forgetting their mutual obligations, openly violating the federal compact and setting congressional enactments at defiance ; disunion fulminated by a partisan press, proclaimed from the pulpit and boldly advocated in the halls of Congress ; the peaceful soil of a sister State invaded by armed

men, incited to the wildest excesses by the dangerous teachings of a false philanthropy ; doctrines tending to sow discord among us and destroy the social fabric itself, indorsed by men to whom we have entrusted the welfare of the nation.

These are but a few of the necessary results of a rabid fanaticism, that loses the substance in grasping the shadow.

Impressed with the necessity of immediate action to avert the dangers that threaten our political existence as a nation, desirous of exerting our influence in favor of right and law, wishing to see peace and harmony restored and the Constitution strictly adhered to, we, members of the democratic party, have associated together for the dissemination and support of doctrines best calculated to produce this most desired effect.

We believe all power emanates from God, by whom it is entrusted to individuals and communities to be exercised by them for the general welfare.

We believe every citizen, native or adopted, is fully entitled to the protection of the government in the enjoyment of life, liberty and property.

Though we cheerfully submit to the will of the majority, we cannot forget, that the minority have rights which should be protected. The will of the majority to be just must be reasonable.

We regard the States as sovereign in the control and management of their own affairs, except so far as they are restricted by the Constitution.

We regard the several States, so far as relates to their associate rights and powers in the Union, in all respects upon an exact equality.

As the Union was the result of mutual concessions for the general welfare, we regard all compromises and conditions on the part of the States as obligatory upon their legislatures and magistrates, and binding upon the conscience of the people.

The States are entitled to the protection of the Federal Government in the enjoyment of their respective rights, and each State is bound to prevent the forcible invasion of a sister State, and punish those participating therein.

But while we recognize the sovereignty of the States in their proper spheres, we condemn as a violation of the Federal compact, any action on their part tending to defeat the execution of any of the provisions of the Constitution, or render nugatory the laws of Congress.

The act for the reclaiming of fugitive slaves being designed to carry out an express provision of the Constitution cannot, with fidelity, be repealed or in any way impaired.

We condemn and repudiate as a sophistry and delusion, the doctrine that there is an irrepressible conflict between the Northern or Southern States of the Union, which can only be determined by the subversion of one or the other of their domestic institutions.

Recognizing the Constitution as the "Charter of our Rights," and sensible of the blessings it has conferred upon us, we cheerfully submit to its requirements, and the laws made in pursuance thereof, as the supreme law of the land.

We regard the general government as a government of limited powers, specially delegated in the Constitution, and we believe the powers therein conferred are amply sufficient to carry into effect the intentions of its founders.

We deprecate the exercise of doubtful powers not specially designated as both inexpedient and dangerous.

We adhere to the counsels of Jefferson in recommending "peace, commerce, and friendship with all nations, entangling alliances with none."

While we consider it at present inexpedient and unnecessary to extend our dominion by the acquisition of further territory, we condemn any action on the part of the government, by treaty or otherwise, which should restrain us from doing so, should the safety and welfare of the nation require it.

We adhere to those true principles of our democratic faith, that no more revenue ought to be raised than is actually required to defray the necessary expenses of government; that it is the duty of each branch of government to practice the most rigid economy in conducting public affairs; and that these and every other proper means should be adopted and enforced for the gradual but speedy extinction of the national debt.

The Territories being the common property of the Union should be open alike to all.

The powers of Congress being particularly designated, we condemn any interference on its part in the domestic affairs of States or ~~territories~~, believing that legislation should be strictly confined to the performance of the duties assigned it in the Constitution.

We view with respect the admirable foresight of the founders of our government in separating the various departments and assigning them their respective spheres.

By the establishment of an independent judiciary, supreme in its own department, they have erected a barrier against the abuse of power and the tyranny of faction.

Elevated above the contentions of party, unbiassed by prejudice, and uninfluenced by local attachments, the Supreme Court, as the expounder of the supreme law of the land, stands between the General government and the States, checking the encroachments of the one party and rebuking assumptions of power by the other.

As the expounder of the Constitution we yield obedience to its decisions on all questions coming within its jurisdiction.

In the character of its judges, the wisdom of its decisions, and the firmness with which it has maintained its exalted position amidst the changes around it, we have the best guaranty for the preservation of that greatest blessing of civil liberty, *security under the law*.

We view with regret any action on the part of States or individuals, tending to abridge its powers or lessen its influence, believing with Story, that "if the Constitution ever perishes it will be when the judiciary shall have become feeble and inert, and either unwilling or unable to perform the solemn duties imposed upon it by the original structure of the government."

Let us then submit to this national tribunal the disposal of those perplexing questions that properly belong to its jurisdiction, and that have already engrossed so much of the public attention to the detriment of our national interests.

Why any longer disturb the peace of the nation by useless discussions on Congressional and Territorial powers, which can only be properly and finally determined by an honest submission to the decision of that great arbiter, the Constitution has so wisely provided for us ?

Is it right that in order to secure the success of an opinion

or the triumph of a party, we should peril the existence of the Union and jeopardize the happiness of millions ?

How long are we to continue in our midst that spirit of disunion that fanaticism has evoked, which would never have intruded itself into our political contests if those who called it into life had been faithful to the teachings of the Constitution, and attentive to their own State affairs ?

Let us unite, in the coming contest, to re-establish peace and harmony in the nation ; restore a confidence, too readily destroyed, and maintain inviolate the rights of each individual member of our noble Union.

Though we may differ on questions of finance, questions of commerce and other issues of the day, we cannot differ as to the value of the Union, the blessings it has conferred upon us, nor in the desire to transmit, inviolate, the liberty we enjoy to those who are yet to take our places in the march of nations.

Let us bury our local prejudices, forget our past differences of opinion, and unite in the support of those principles, upon the success of which depends the perpetuity of our institutions.

We invite the co-operation of all national men in the coming contest, that standing side by side in the ranks of the Democratic party, we may struggle manfully for the preservation of the Union and the supremacy of the law.

JOHN FARRELL,
President.

T. LUBEY, }
E. J. M'GEAN, } *Recording Secretaries.*





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